MYSTERY SENTENCES GRAMMAR GUIDELINES

In *Mystery Sentences,* a word's part of speech is determined by the way it functions in a sentence. For example, although "running" is a form of the verb "to run," it functions as a noun in the following sentence:

Running is good exercise.

In this case, "running" is also the subject of the sentence—the person, place, or thing that the sentence "talks about." Any word that acts as a subject or object in a sentence is usually functioning as a noun.

Unfortunately, English grammar can be a very tricky topic, and there are always exceptions to any general rules or guidelines. In *Mystery Sentences,* the major exception to the "function over form" rule appears in the way that infinitives are labeled. To avoid confusion, all infinitive form of verbs are labeled as infinitives, regardless of the way they function in a sentence. For example, in the sentence "He always wanted to win," *to win* would be labeled an infinitive, even though it functions as a noun (and the direct object) in the sentence.

NOUN: *the name of a person, place, thing, or idea*

Types	Examples	Sample Sentences
Proper	Jane, Minnesota	*Jane* took the *Scholastic Aptitude Test.* N N N N
Common	student, test	The *student* took the *test.* N N
Verbal	talking	*Talking* is their favorite activity. N

All words that function as nouns will be labeled N.

VERB: *a word that expresses action, being, or state of being*

Types	Examples	Sample Sentences
Action	run, laugh, think, wait	We *waited* until the rain *stopped.* V V
Being	be, been, am, is, are, was, were	Your friend *is* here. V
State of Being	seem, look, appear, sound, feel, taste, become, smell	He *seems* happy. V
Auxiliary	be, been, am, is, are, was, were; have, has, had; will, shall; do, does, did	We *are learning* a new song. V V We *have been learning* a new song. V V V We *do sing* well. V V
Modal Auxiliary	would, can, could, should may, might, must, ought	You *must listen* carefully. V V He *can repair* anything. V V

All words that function as verbs will be labeled V.

ADJECTIVE: a word that modifies a noun or a pronoun

Types	Examples	Sample Sentences
Proper	French, Texan, Ford, Sears	He bought a *Ford* pickup truck. AJ The *Andrews* Sisters were a popular singing group. AJ
Interrogative	which? what? whose?	*Whose* poem won the prize? AJ
Demonstrative	this, that, these, those	*This* tomato looks ripe. AJ
Descriptive	green, soft, likable, expensive legal	She bought a *green* belt. AJ Frank is *generous.* AJ
Indefinite	any, every, no, all, both, each, another, other, either, neither, few, fewer, several, many, more, most, much, enough, little, one, two, three,...etc.	*Several* people fell asleep during the lecture. AJ *Each* country has *one* flag. AJ AJ
Possessive	Mary's, her, everybody's	A *cowboy's* horse is *his* best friend. AJ AJ
Noun		She wore her blue *silk* blouse. AJ We live in a *brick* building. AJ
Verbal	amazing, fried, broken	He sounds like a *broken* record. AJ

All words that function as adjectives will be labeled AJ.

ADVERB: a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb

Types	Examples	Sample Sentences
Adverb of time, place, direction, manner, etc.	now, here	I must leave *now.* Stand *here.* Turn *left.* AV AV AV She spoke *hesitantly.* AV
Adverb of degree	very	He is *very* intelligent, We are *quite* tired. AV AV
Negative	not, never	He is *not* ready. AV She has *never* been away from home. AV

All words that function as adverbs will be labeled AV.

PRONOUN: *a word that takes the place (does the job) of a noun in the sentence*

Types	**Examples**	**Sample Sentences**
Personal Compound Personal	I, we, you, he, she, it, they, me, us, him, her, them; mine, ours, yours, his, hers, theirs; myself, ourselves, yourself, yourselves, himself, herself, itself, themselves	The scarf is *mine*. *I* knitted *it myself.* P P P P
Interrogative Demonstrative Clause-introducing	who? whom? whose? which? what? this, that, these, those, whoever, whomever, whichever, whatever	*Whose* are *these?* P P *Those* are the cookies *that* Ted baked. P P Take *whichever* you like best. P
Indefinite	any, anybody, anyone, anything, everyone, everybody, nobody, no one, none, nothing, all, both, each, either, neither, few, fewer, another, several, many, more, most, much, plenty, little, less, one, two, three, etc.	*Somebody* took *all* but *two* of the apples. P P P
Reciprocal	each…other; one…another	They looked at *each other.* P P

All types of pronouns will be labeled P.

PREPOSITION: a word that shows a relationship between its object (a noun or pronoun) and another word in the sentence

	Examples	Sample Sentences
	at, on, in, of, to, by, up, out, off, for, near, with, from, over, upon, onto, into, down, after, until, about, along, under, before, across, beside, beneath, through, because of, in spite of, instead of, as far as, along with	The box is *on* the table. PP We walked *as far as* the corner. PP PP PP

All words that function as prepositions will be labeled PP.

ARTICLE: a word that signals the approach of a noun

	Examples	Sample Sentence
	a, an , the	*The* dog needs *a* new leash. A A

Articles will be labeled A.

CONJUNCTION: a word that joins words, phrases, and clauses

Types	Examples	Sample Sentences
Coordinating	and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet	They ate a pizza *and* some ice cream, C *but* they were still hungry. C
Correlative	either...or; neither...nor; both...and; not...but; not only...but also	The weather was *either* too hot *or* too cold. C C
Subordinating	as, if, because, before, as if, since, until, unless, when, where, whether, after, as long as, that, so that, than, although, though, while, why, how	We got there *before* the show started. C He thought *that* we needed help. C
Adverbial	therefore, thus, however, nevertheless, moreover, hence, consequently, nonetheless, accordingly, likewise, otherwise, indeed	I have some good news; *however,* C I also have some bad news.

All words that function as conjunctions will be labeled C.

INTERJECTION: a word or phrase that expresses strong feeling

	Examples	Sample Sentences
	Hey, Ouch!	*Hey,* you're stepping on my toe! I *Good grief,* it's raining again! I I

All words that function as interjections will be labeled I.

INFINITIVE: a form of a verb that follows the word "to" and functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb

Types		Sample Sentences
Noun		He has always wanted *to win.* IV IV
Adverb		The book is easy *to read.* IV IV
Adjective		It was a day *to remember.* IV IV

All infinitives will be labeled IV regardless of how they function in the sentence.

CONTRACTION: a shortened form of a word or group of words ("can't" for "cannot," "we'll" for "we will"). The apostrophes in contractions indicate where letters have been left out.

Types	Examples	Sample Sentences
Noun/verb (N/V)	Judy's	*Judy's* going to be late for the movie. N/V
Pronoun/verb (P/V)	I'm, he's, it's, you're, we're, they're, you've, we've, they've, etc.	*I'm* coming. P/V
Verb/adverb (V/A)	isn't, aren't, doesn't, haven't, wasn't, don't, weren't, hasn't, haven't, hadn't, wouldn't, shouldn't, etc.	Patrick *isn't* here. V/A

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